YELLOW JACK.

[This ballad is founded on the true story of the introduction of yellow fever into an English seaport town, as told in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. A ship, all of whose crew had died of yellow fever, steered straight into port, bearing its dead—and thus communicated the fever to a large proportion of the inhabitants of the town.]

Down below the sea-line dipt the summer sun,
Gladly earth and ocean saw the tyrant die;
From the fort above the harbor boomed the evening gun,
And the gulls rose screaming from the cliff on high.

Pier, parade and terrace flamed with colors gay,
Every ship in harbor with festal flags was drest,
For the crowded seaport town kept holiday,
And was fain to look her merriest and her best.

Every eye went seaward as the cannon spoke;
The echoes waked and answered and fell asleep once more;
And sudden past the headland, thro' the cloud of smoke,
Came a gallant ship, full sail, and straight for shore.

Red against the sunset her towering canvas shone,
Defiant at her mast head the pennon fluttered free;
Past the fort and toward the harbor silent she bore on,
Dip of flag nor sound of gun—no salute gave she.

From the fort's embrasure rang reminder loud,
Still the pennon fluttered—still no answer came;
"Lo, our flag insulted!" cried the watching crowd,
"Give them solid shot, their insolence to tame!"

With unswerving prow the vessel onward sped,
And they hailed and shouted and reply was none,
Right and left before her the pleasure-barges fled;
One she crushed and sank, but silent held she on.

Shot a man-of-war's boat swiftly from the pier,
Hailed her—ran alongside—got them no reply;
Up her side the crew went swarming with a cheer,
"Now we'll teach them manners, or know the reason why."

Not a soul to meet them, and they stared aghast;
Empty was the deck—no helmsman at the wheel—
Only one dead sailor, lying huddled by the mast,
Grinned as if defying their pistols and their steel.

Down the hatch they stumbled—back they rushed amazed—
For the crew and Captain were lying dead below;
Helter, skelter o'er the bulwark to their boat again,
And back to shore in terror, hard as they could row.

Quickly as they landed rumor went before,
Pier, parade and terrace emptied as they came;
For the King of Terrors was steering for that shore,
And they recognized his colors now and knew his name.

Death, with his most dreaded henchman at his side,
Death, all fierce and famished, maddening to be fed;
But his appetite was glutted when the summer died,
And more than half the dwellers in that sea port town were dead.

Now the town has dwindled, now the fort is mute;
But men still remember, and ballad-mongers sing,
How they challenged Death—grim Death—himself for a salute,
And how Yellow Jack avenged the insult to his king.

—*Herbert E. Clarke, in Youth's Companion.*

"LALAGE-JANE."

A Pathetic Story of Old Plantation Life.

Lalage-Jane stood on the front steps, and looked thoughtfully over the lawn. The East India geese hissed and waddled across the green space, and beyond the levee the river gleamed dull copper-color in the murky air. Below her, half hidden in the grass, lay Jimmie trying to provoke the "stingy geese" to combat by throwing what he called "rocks" at them. Happy Jimmie! he had nothing on his mind, and Lalage-Jane had so much.

"But he's only a baby," she thought, looking down at him with a protecting expression on her ugly little face.

"Sis!" the boy called with sudden shrillness: "Reckon we came forty-'eleven miles to-day!"

That was what she was thinking about. She did not know the distance any better than he, for in all her seven years she had never left the limits of her father's plantation until yesterday.

Mammy had waked them up early in the morning, and had told them that Mr. Ainsworth was going to take them home with him.

"What for?" Lalage-Jane had asked.

"Li'le girls oughtn't'er ax questions 'bout what don't discern 'em," mammy had answered, with a dignity which was curiously at variance with hands that trembled so she could hardly tie the ribbons of the child's sandals.

Lalage-Jane had seen Mr. Ainsworth once before, and she knew that he was a minister, but what ministers were she had only a vague idea. She had asked her father, and he had said:

"They are gentlemen who fatten upon the fears of their fellow-men, daughter."

It had not given Lalage-Jane a pleasant idea of Mr. Ainsworth, and, as she sat opposite him in the carriage, she felt like Hop o' My Thumb going to the Ogre's castle. On arriving there they were delivered over to Mrs. Ainsworth, who—to carry out the analogy still farther—seemed to be a kind-hearted person, very much after the fashion of the Ogre's wife in the legend.

"An' she looked scared, too," Lalage-Jane thought. "If she kisses Jimmie again, and says, 'Poor child,' I'm afraid he'll knock her. I jus' hope he won't!"

But he did. The rest was very confusing. There were five little Ainsworths who laid forcible hands upon them and dragged them off into captivity, to be teased, shouted at and squabbled over. They were unpleasantly frank in their comments, too. And among other things they told Lalage-Jane she was as ugly as her name. That was no news to her; she had often heard her mother lament that the girl should be the ugly one. As for her name—she knew that her father had given her the first and her mother the second half of it; she did not know, however, that he had called her Lalage in sheer delight at flying in the face of usage, and that her mother had tacked on the Jane as a desperate effort to reduced it to respectability.

At last she escaped from her persecutors and took refuge with Mrs. Ainsworth and Mrs. Ainsworth's unmarried sister; but they stopped talking, and presently one of them called her "poor child," and asked why she did not run away and play?

Lalage-Jane obeyed the hint—and how glad she was on the following afternoon when they came within sight of their gate. "Father'll be waitin' at the steps for us," she said to Jimmie, with a laugh. "You know we never told him good-bye." But he was not there. Only mammy came to meet them, and they were taken into their mother's room, where the shutters were all bowed. She kissed them—Lalage-Jane once and Jimmie a dozen times—and then mammy put them out of the room, with a parting order to make no noise. Mr. Ainsworth stayed behind.

"When he comes out," Lalage-Jane was thinking, and at that moment he came. He nodded carelessly to the child and began to descend the steps, but she stopped him with a timid question:

"If you please, sir—I want to know—where father is?"

"Your father!" Mr. Ainsworth said, looking at her uncomfortably. What a plain child she was, and—shade of Horace!—to call her Lalage. Her eyes watched him with a steady, unchildish look. That was the worst of his calling. All his own ills and all the ills of other people!

"My child," he said, and then he hesitated a little. Her mother was the proper person to tell her. It was too bad to thrust such a thing upon him. He had done his part when he shielded the children from a sight that would have stood like a nightmare between them and their father's memory all their days. "My child," he began again. Unconsciously he fell into his favorite pulpit attitude—his hand a little extended, and his sweet, mellow voice—his voice was a perpetual delight to him—properly subdued:

"He has gone to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.'"

Lalage-Jane looked at him in wonder and indignation. "You mean he's gone travelin' an' won't come back?" she asked; and then she laughed. "You don't know! He'd never stay away from Jimmie and me!"

Mr. Ainsworth glanced back at the child as he rode away.

"She will be as peculiar as her father was, and he—well! he had the courage of his opinions. When he had had enough of this life he gave himself his quietus. Unlucky? Unlucky was not the name for him! And then to invest his whole fortune in a boat. Of course it blew up!"

Yet when George Garrison heard the news of his ruin the men around remembered how well he bore it. He rode quietly out of town, but he never reached home. The first driver who passed along the road saw a stiffened figure swaying in the gray morning light. He had hung himself with his bridle-rein.

But the little daughter still waited for his return. Every morning her first question was:

"Has—has he come yet, mammy?"

And mammy would shake her head and say:

"Law, no, chile!"

"My min' misgive me sometime dat I ought 'er tell her," the old woman would say in melancholy gossip with Aunt Winney, the cook; "but it'll go nigh to break her heart, she was dat wropped up in 'er paw! An' dar's her maw a not takin' no notice o' nuthin', but jes' a-cryin' an' a-cryin!"

One day a strange gentleman came. Lissa, the under-nurse, said he was a lawyer. When he was gone Lalage-Jane ventured into her mother's room and begged to know what made her cry. Mrs. Garrison raised her pretty babyish face with an irritated movement.

"It's money," she said. "That's what is the matter."

Money! Was that all? Lalage-Jane almost laughed in her gladness. She had some, a whole beautiful Mexican dollar. She kept it in an old snuff-box and once a week she washed it. She brought it and slipped it into her mother's hand.

"There, mother!" she said joyfully, "it's for you!"

Mrs. Garrison looked up with a start and thrust the coin aside pettishly, so that it fell to the floor with a sharp ring, and spun round and round. "What good would that do?" she asked, and began to sob again and wish "Richard would come home."

Lalage-Jane stood for a moment, and then went quietly away. She sat down on the steps and pinched her fingers hard to keep the tears from coming.

"I'll get some money for mother somehow," she thought, "an' then I reckon I'd better go an' hunt for father. Uncle Richard's in Cuba. I reckon father's there, too—an' mos' anyone would show me th' way there."

For a long time she sat and thought. Presently she jumped up with a laugh. Jimmie was, as usual, bestowing his attention upon his enemies, "the stingy geese." All his spare time was spent in fleeing from or pursuing them.

"Jimmie," Lalage-Jane said, persuasively, "don't you want to help me cut wood to sell to the boats, like father did last spring?"

"A'right," Jimmie said, placidly, "if ye'll gim'me the hatchet. I can hatchet real good."

Poor Lalage-Jane! At last, however, this difficulty was tided over, and Jimmie was pacified with the carving-knife, surreptitiously obtained. The next thing was to escape mammy's vigilance. This done, Lalage-Jane walked through the wood which skirted the cleared land and examined the trees with the critical eye of a woodsman.

"The beeches an' magnolias are a little big," she said, gravely; we'll cut some pine."

They chose a young sapling, and on one side Lalage-Jane chopped and on the other Jimmie gravely sawed his knife to and fro.

"Drefful tough!" he said, at last. "Now yo' lem'me hatchet some."

Lalage-Jane looked at the pile of diminutive chips around her and sighed:

"Then let's try bay-ball," she said.

The wild cucumber trees were easy to cut, and soon they had a little pile of logs—about two feet long and an inch in diameter! At last Jimmie announced that he was tired and was going home.

"Unless yo' tell me a story out o' 'The Aravian Nights.'"

His obedient slave chopped and narrated, though she was tired, too, until Jimmie interrupted her with a shout:

"Here we are, Jared! This way! Are yo' coming to play with us?"

A tall, athletic man was approaching them through the undergrowth. His color and his filed teeth told that he was an Ashantee, and his face was curiously tattooed. On each temple, in direct line with his eyebrows, were two small blue arrows, a sign that the royal blood of his tribe flowed through his veins. The children often wondered to each other what these curious scars were, but never to him, for once Jimmie had asked him about them, and in his anger he had almost struck the child. It was the first and only time they ever saw him angry. The strongest passion in this man's breast was a desire not to speak of the life he had been taken from when a boy of ten.

"Yo's wanted t' de house, missy," he said. Then he shook his head gravely. "Young ladies hadn't ought'er chop wood. If yo' want a dawlhouse——"

A dollhouse! Lalage-Jane's eyes widened with protest.

"'Tisn't that at all, Jared! It's wood. Wood to sell to th' boats, and th' money's for mother."

He did not laugh. Years afterward Lalage-Jane remembered that gratefully. He pulled her castle down, but he did it with a gentle touch which helped her to bear the bitter disappointment.

The strange gentleman had come again one day, and was just leaving when Lalage-Jane heard him say: "There is no compromise possible. The judgment covers nearly all. We'll have to let the law take its course."

When he was gone, even mammy cried, and Mrs. Garrison began her old lamentation: "If Richard would only come home!"

But no one had ever heard from him—the mails were so uncertain and in those days there were no telegrams.

The next day a boat stopped at the Garrison landing, and Lalage-Jane saw figure after figure pass through the plantation gate and up the staging.

"Those are our people!" she said, breathlessly. "Where are they goin', mammy? Who's taken 'em?"

"To the city," mammy said, with a sob in her old cracked voice. "'Taint none of Missus' doin's. De gen'lman say-ed 'twas a judgment took 'em."

They brought Jared, at his earnest entreaty, to tell the children good-bye, and he knelt and kissed them in tearless silence.

"Come"—the marshal said, touching the shoulder of the kneeling man. "Come, we must be goin'."

"You shan't have him!" Lalage-Jane cried, with a storm of tears. "He's *my* Jared! I'll tell father 'bout yo' the *minute* he comes home!"

"It aint me, miss," the man said, uncomfortably. Jared rose and obeyed in the same silence. He stumbled once or twice as he walked, but he never looked back. The last sound of his old life which followed him was Lalage-Jane's voice crying his name.

Then a dreamy period. Seven long days of sunshine that seemed to turn the earth to a cloud of dust. One afternoon the hot silence was broken by the whistle of a boat.

"Three—" Lalage-Jane said, counting each blast. "Do you hear, Jimmie? They're goin' t' land! Quick! I 'spect it's father comin' home."

In a moment more the children were out on the levee, and perched upon an old gunwale, from which they could watch the great white boat curve into shore. A plantation wagon came lumbering down for freight, and amid the discordant shouts of the roustabouts, the staging swung into place. The guards were filled with passengers and the lower deck was crowded with negroes. It was evident that some up-country planter had been to New Orleans to purchase slaves.

Apart from the others, and huddled timidly together, sat a little group, and towering above them all, stood a negro of superb build with the brown skin and sharp features of an Ashantee.

His arms were folded across his breast, and there was something terrible in the utter immobility of the face turned toward the shore. As soon as the boat had touched land, a murmur ran through this group, faint at first, then swelling louder, until now a woman, plucking the man by the sleeve, cried shrilly:

"Look yonder, Jared! Bless de Lawd! it's li'le missy an' Mars Jeames!"

The children heard the cry, and Jimmie sent back an answering shout of recognition. Like a flash, Lalage-Jane was running up the staging—at the risk of being knocked down by a rolling barrel—and plunged headlong into the group.

They clustered around her with broken exclamations, and she was gracious to them all, but it was Jared to whom she clung.

"Missy," said the man hoarsely. "Missy, ' den yo' aint forgot yore pore old Jared?"

"Of course I 'member you, Jared!" the child replied. "An' I'm so glad you've come home, an' you've brought father, too, haven't you, Jared?"

The man shook his head, and some of the women began to cry.

"Come, Jared!" she cried, tugging at his hand. "Come an' find father, an' then we'll get off. Quick, Jared, 'fore they start!"

Jared set his teeth, and loosened the little impetuous hand from his; and the first whistle blew.

"Oh, come!" the child cried in an agony of entreaty. "Don't you hear 'em goin' to start? Quick, Jared—quick!"

Just then the second whistle sounded and Lalage-Jane felt herself lifted up and carried on shore. When the overseer put her down, the boat had pushed out from land, amid a confused sound of farewells from the hands in the wagon to their old comrades on board, who answered with wild lamentations; but Jared stood like a bronze statue of despair.

He had followed the child with his eyes until she was carried out of sight, and now he turned his gaze once more upon the dear and beautiful spot that he saw for the last time. Except for that shadowy thought—which he had so fiercely crushed into oblivion—of a country where palm trees outline themselves upon burning reaches of sand—every memory of his life was interwoven with it; and he was going from it.

There he had grown up, the companion of the dead man whom he had loved with the fidelity of a dog; every tree, every rod of ground was familiar to him, and his heart grew sick within him as he looked.

He had loved it as his home—he forgot he was a slave. Meanwhile the distance widened steadily—pitilessly; and the agony of the thought unsealed his lips. Forgetful of the bystanders, he stretched out his arms toward the shore; and cried, in a voice hoarse and shaken: "Far'well, ole home—'long far'well!"

That peculiar ghastly hue, which is the palor of a brown skin, had come over his face.

A moment more and they had rounded the bend. Behind them there was naught to be seen but the low, willow-lined banks, that stretched out and out until they seemed to meet beneath the blue sky.—*Margaretta Wetherill Kernan, in N. O. Times-Democrat.*

—The following literary note is from the *Arizona Howler:* "We notice that a few ornery Eastern papers condemn the use of the phrase 'in our midst.' We would tell these dudes that they don't know what they are talking about. Last week, for instance, we stated that we had been suffering from a severe attack of colic 'in our midst,' and we will leave it to any of our intelligent readers if that isn't A 1 English. It may be that the Eastern papers know where our colic was better than we do, but we doubt it. Come out to Arizona, gents, if you want to learn how to sling United States with neatness and dispatch.

—The average yield of the French vintage for the four years from 1875 to 1878, inclusive, was 1,275,000,000 gallons. The last three vintages have decreased at a greater rate than 100,000,000 gallons per year, and now it is reported that in the vintage of 1886 more than one-fifth of the yield was produced from dry raisins and dregs of the first and second press.